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WIPING DEVICE FOR A WINDSHIELD

Background Information

The present invention is directed to a device and a method for wiping a window according to the definition of the species in the independent claims.

Numerous such devices are already known from the related art. These devices have an electric motor, a mechanical system, as well as one or more wiper blades, which are swivel-driven by the electric motor. In the motor vehicle, the wipers then swivel between an upper wiper blade end position, which is normally located in the region of the A-pillar of the vehicle, and a lower wiper blade end position, which is typically located at the lower edge of the windshield.

As a rule, the mechanical system includes a crank drive made up of torque rods and connecting rods, which are interconnected by bearings. Since, during operation of the wiper device, considerable bearing forces are constantly exerted transversely to the bearing axis, it must be made from an especially high-quality material to prevent premature wear. Alternatively, the wiper blade end positions must be situated far enough from the A-pillar or the lower window edge, to compensate for displacements of this position due to wear.

Summary of the Invention

The device according to the present invention having the features of the main claim has the advantage that a control device compensates for clearances of the mechanical systems, which become greater as the number of loads increases, due to wear. Since constant load changes subject the crank drive bearings to wear, thereby degrading bearing quality, a

shifting in the reversing position of the wiper blades on the window occurs with increasing age of the vehicle or with increasing age of the wiper device. These clearances of the mechanical systems are compensated for with the aid of a control device according to the present invention, so that the wiper blades will always return to the same position over the entire service life of the wiper device.

It is also advantageous to compensate for the clearance of the mechanical system as a function of service life, since vibrations that occur during vehicle operation also cause the bearing play to increase, due to the own weight of the individual components of the wiper device.

It is also conceivable to use an overlapping compensation as a function of load change and service life.

Advantageous further refinements of the device according to the present invention may be derived from the features recited in the dependent claims.

It is particularly advantageous for the drive end positions, in which the reversible electric motor changes its direction of rotation, to be modified as a function of service life or with an increase in the number of load changes. This enables the wiper blade end positions to be precisely maintained, without requiring expensive sensors in the region of the windshield or the wiper blades to detect the exact position of the wiper blades.

If the service life of the mechanical system is dependent upon the distance traveled by the vehicle, it is advantageous that no separate time measuring device be required in the vehicle. The distance traveled by the motor vehicle is always known from the odometer that every motor vehicle comes equipped with.

Furthermore, it is advantageous for the compensation to occur incrementally, in particular every fifty- to two-hundred thousand, preferably every hundred thousand wiping periods or load changes. In this manner, a compensation is only implemented if a measurable difference between the desired wiper blade end position and the actual wiper blade end position is reached.

It is likewise advantageous to design the control device such that a compensation is effected every two- to ten-thousand kilometers. This allows an incremental compensation, even if the vehicle is only used in fairly dry weather. This is particularly advantageous in the case of cabriolets, which are typically used only in dry weather on secondary roads having uneven road surfaces, where vehicle vibrations are naturally more pronounced than on expressways.

It is also advantageous to let compensation occur continuously after each wiping period. In this manner, an optimal wiper blade end position is always maintained, and there is also no need for additional signals from the odometer, the clock or a wiper-period counter.

It is also advantageous to design the control device such that only the upper wiper blade end position, in the region of the A-pillar, is subject to compensation. The area of the A-pillar is the critical area in which the wiper blade, on the one hand, must be guided as closely as possible to the A-pillar in order to achieve as large a wiping field as possible, yet, on the other hand, must not touch the A-pillar, in particular during rapid wiping operation. However, this may easily happen if there is no compensation for the increase in the clearance of the mechanical system. This is not quite as critical in the lower wiper blade end position, since this is normally only of secondary importance to the driver's field of vision.

Brief Description of the Drawing

An exemplary embodiment of the present invention is represented in the drawing and explained in detail in the following description. The figures show:

Figure 1: a schematic depiction of the wiper device according to the present invention;
Figure 2: a part of a wiper device according to the present invention, having a wiper blade in the lower wiper blade end position;
Figure 3: a wiper device according to the present invention as shown in Figure 2, but with the wiper blade in the upper wiper blade end position;
and
Figure 4: a schematic representation of a method according to the present invention.

Detailed Description

Figure 1 depicts a wiper device 10 on window 12. Wiper device 10 has two wiper blades 14 and a mechanical system 16, as well as a control device 18.

In this case, mechanical system 16 includes a connecting rod 20, a torque rod 22 and an output crank 24. Attached thereto are wiper arms 26, which are equipped with wiper blades 14. Connecting rod 20, torque rod 22, crank 24 and wiper arms 26 are rotatably connected to one another via three bearings. Connecting rod 20 and torque rod 22 are connected via the torque rod bearing 28, the torque rod and the output crank via the output crank bearing 30, and output crank 24 with wiper arm 26 via wiper bearing 32.

Window 12, in this case, is the windshield of a motor vehicle. On its sides 34, it is framed by the A-pillars of the motor vehicle.

Wiper blades 14 are shown by continuous lines in a lower wiper blade end position 36, and by dotted lines in an upper wiper blade end position 38. The area between these two positions 36 and 38 includes a swing angle p.

Since the wiper device shown is a synchronized wiper device, wiper blade 14 is located in upper wiper blade end position 38 in the area of the motor vehicle's A-pillar, that is, in the area of one of sides 34 of window 12.

Mechanical system 16 is driven by a drive 40, which is designed as reversible, electronically commutable electric motor 40. It is connected to control device 18, which controls electric motor 40.

Figure 2 shows a cut-away portion of Figure 1. Wiper blade 14, wiper arm 26 are connected to output crank 24 via wiper bearing 32. It, in turn, is connected to torque rod 22 via output crank bearing 30, which is driven by electric motor 40 via torque rod bearing 28 and connecting rod 20.
In this case, electric motor 40 is equipped with a Hall sensor 42, which transmits signals indicative of the position of the armature shaft of electric motor 40 to control device 18. As a result, it is always informed of the instantaneous position of connecting rod 20. In addition, control device 18 may also be connected to an odometer 44, for instance, and/or a counter 46 which detects the number of reversions of electric motor 40.

Drive 40, in this case, is in a lower drive end position 50, so that wiper blade 14 is in the lower wiper blade end position 36.

In Figure 3, the same area is shown as in Figure 2, but wiper blade 14 is in the upper wiper blade end position 38, and connecting rod 20, therefore, in the upper drive end position.

The functioning of the wiper device is described below.

Electric motor 40, via a worm and a worm gear, moves an output crank 46, to which connecting rod 20 is rotatably fixed. In order to move wiper blade 14, connecting rod 20 executes a swivel movement, with the aid of electric motor 40, between an upper drive end position 48 and a lower drive end position 50. Each of these corresponds to upper wiper blade end position 38 and lower wiper blade end position 36.

As a result of varying environmental influences on mechanical system 16, in particular on bearings 28, 30, 32, the bearing clearance of individual bearings 28, 30, 32 increases over time, leading to a shifting of wiper blade end positions 36, 38. Due to overswinging, this might result, for instance, in wiper blade 14 striking the vehicle's A-pillar in upper wiper blade end position 38 during rapid wiper operation, causing damage to it within a very short period of time. During slow wiper operation, in which the wiper blade is dragged across window 12, upper wiper blade end position 38 would move more and more towards the inside, and swing angle P would, thus, become increasingly smaller.

According to the present invention, control device 18 is designed such that, with increasing service life, or with an increase in the number of load changes, the lower or upper drive end position 48, 50 is shifted. This shifting also depends, for instance, on the speed with which wiper blade 14 glides across window 12. As also already discussed, it might, therefore, be useful to shift upper drive end position 48 towards smaller swing angles P during rapid wiper operation, in order to prevent wiper blade 14 from hitting the A-pillar, while drive end position 48 is shifted toward a larger swing angle P, by an angle y, in slow wiper operation. The compensation may be individually adapted to the motor vehicle.

The same compensation as in Figure 2 is analogously implemented in lower wiper blade end position 36. With increasing service life, lower drive end position 50 is

shifted towards larger swing angles P, by an angle d, in slow wiper operation.

Figure 4 shows another exemplary embodiment of a method according to the present invention. In a first step 60, the wiper device is switched to rapid or slow wiper operation. In a second step 62 and/or 64, the service life/operation duration and/or the number of load changes that have occurred thus far is determined. In a third step, the speed of wiper blades 14 is then determined, for instance, by determining whether the wiper device has been switched to fast or slow wiper operation. As a function of the results from second and third steps 62 through 66, drive end positions 48 and 50 of drive 40 are then determined in a fourth step 68, and drive 40 started in fifth step 70.